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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, inspire us to treat others as we want them to treat us. Let us rejoice in their strengths, and let us be patient with their weaknesses.

As our Senators do the work of freedom today, may they be sustained by Your love. Remind them that Your Divine affection has given them everything they need for life and liberty. Answer them when they cry out to You and tell them great and unsearchable things they do not know. Give them the humility to understand that none of us has a monopoly on Your truth and that we all need each other to discover Your guidance together.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 5 o'clock this afternoon. During that period of time, each Senator will be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each, if they wish.

At 5 p.m. the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the nomi-

nation of Beverly Reid O'Connell to be a district judge for the Central District of California.

At 5:30 p.m. there will be a rollcall vote on confirmation of the O'Connell nomination.

PREVENTING GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the debate over the best way to prevent gun violence in America raises strong emotions. Second amendment advocates—me among them—want to preserve and protect the right of every law-abiding citizen to bear arms. Victims of gun violence and family members of those killed by guns—me among them—want to ensure that guns are kept from the hands of criminals and those with mental illnesses severe in nature. These are both worthy goals, and they should not be mutually exclusive goals.

It is possible to uphold the second amendment while protecting innocent Americans from gun violence. Of course it is. The compromise background check proposal before the Senate—a measure crafted by Senators TOOMEY, MANCHIN, KIRK, and SCHUMER—achieves both goals. This bipartisan measure would keep guns out of the hands of dangerous criminals by requiring background checks for private gun sales at gun shows and over the Internet.

It strengthens the existing instant check system by encouraging States to put all their criminal and mental health records into the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, a step supported by gun rights groups. And it would establish a National Commission on Mass Violence to study all causes of mass violence in our country. School safety, mental health, video games—whatever is appropriate should be looked into.

This legislation has the backing of the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms. It has 650,000 members. It is the second largest gun rights group in the Nation.

On this proposal—background checks—the National Rifle Association is not being very talkative. Why? Because they have supported this measure in the past. And while they are not publicly supporting it now, they have done it in the past.

This measure has the support of antigun violence advocates such as Mayors Against Illegal Guns, consisting of hundreds of mayors around the country. It has the support of law enforcement groups, such as the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Although this compromise does not go as far to expand background checks as some had hoped, the nature of compromise is what it is. That is what legislation is all about. It is not perfect, but it certainly is a long, big, heavy step forward.

Expanding background checks to cover gun shows and Internet sales is common sense. It will help protect the innocent from gun violence. And it will also protect firearms sellers. No responsible firearms dealer wants to unwittingly put a gun in the hands of a murderer.

One need only ask a man by the name of Bruce Daly. Mr. Daly sold the shotgun that was used in a shooting rampage at the Lloyd D. George Federal Courthouse in Las Vegas a few years ago.

Seventy-two-year-old security guard and retired police officer Stanley Cooper was murdered by a felon who bought a gun at a gun show in Kingman, AZ—90 miles from Las Vegas. I repeat, the shooter was a convicted felon, who had no right to own a gun and could never have passed a background check. But because Mr. Daly sold the shotgun at a gun show in Arizona, he never had to perform a background check.

After the shooting at the Las Vegas courthouse, Mr. Daly was found to have an expired Federal permit for selling weapons, and because of that he

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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